

## A Grave Moral Evil

A PASTORAL LETTER TO ALL THEIR FLOCKS FROM THE  
ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF SCOTLAND, LENT, 1927

*Dearly Beloved Brethren and Dear Children in Jesus Christ:*

You are well aware that, as chief Pastors, the Bishops of the Church are called upon to nourish with sound doctrine and to safeguard from error the flocks entrusted to their charge. It is this duty which St. Paul enjoins upon St. Timothy when he says: "I charge thee, before God and Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, . . . preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. For there shall be a time when they shall not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy iv, 1-4). You are also aware that at certain times, and in circumstances of grave moment, not only the Bishops in their respective Dioceses, but the Hierarchy of the country as a whole, in a joint Pastoral letter, may feel itself called upon to discharge this duty. These conditions we believe exist at the present time.

### I. THE EVIL

For many years the practice of what is known as birth control has been brought prominently before all classes of the community, by means of lectures, newspapers, books, clinics, and all the various channels available for disseminating information. It is in reality not birth control at all but birth prevention, or more properly prevention of conception; and in this sense it must be understood throughout. The practice itself has acquired such

publicity, and has become the topic of such general conversation as to take away those grounds of hesitation which we certainly should have had in addressing you on a subject of so great delicacy. On the other hand, this practice has found so many advocates amongst men—many of them of great probity and ability—who, with arguments of a most dangerous and plausible kind, seek to propagate it, and thereby inflict incalculable moral and physical evil on the nation, that we deem it our duty, as guardians of the flock of Christ, to take steps in good time to protect you against the practice, pointing out to you clearly and emphatically the teaching of the Church with regard to it.

## II. WHY CONDEMNED

What then, Beloved Brethren, is that teaching? It is simply this, that birth control, as expounded and inculcated today, no matter what the object which it may have in view, is intrinsically evil, as being a grave violation of the law of Nature, and on that account, a grave violation of the law of God, and of the law of Marriage itself. As such, therefore, in every individual case and in all conceivable circumstances this practice is inexcusable before God, and is mortally sinful, and must be numbered amongst those grave offences of which the Apostle speaks when he says that, "they who do such things shall not obtain the Kingdom of God" (Gal. v, 21).

## III. THE LAW OF NATURE

To understand the grounds of this teaching you will remember that a wise Creator has implanted in man certain appetites, desires, or tendencies, accompanied by faculties and powers to satisfy them, with a view to the good of mankind and of man himself, namely, the preservation, continuance, and well-being of the human race. This is their immediate destined end established by the Author of Nature. Such, for example, are the appetites for food and drink in order to sustain life; for society, to meet man's need for companionship; for knowledge, to satisfy his intellectual needs, and so with the rest. These desires are natural and necessary and in themselves good. And for a man to use the faculty for the purpose of attaining the end intended is good and morally right, for it is to act

according to rational human nature and to the very law of his being; to use it in order to defeat the end is morally bad, for it is acting contrary to Nature.

And herein precisely consists the evil of perverting a natural faculty; it is the deliberate misuse of a power implanted in man by Nature and therefore by the God of Nature, and employing it in order to frustrate the end for which it was bestowed. Such perversion is therefore condemned according to an elementary standard of morality known by human reason itself, which has been thus appropriately expressed: "The rule not to use a faculty in such a way as to oppose the realization of its natural end is universally and absolutely valid. There is not a single exception to it. To use a faculty in such a way as to make its natural end impossible of realization is intrinsically unnatural and bad. There could be no more direct and unequivocal violation of Nature than this. It is the complete perversion of Nature's purposes and needs."

Now see how this principle applies to the matter with which we are dealing. In the practice of birth control we have the perversion of a natural faculty, which was ordained by the Creator for one purpose only, the procreation of children, but is deliberately employed for a contrary purpose. The appetite or tendency is indeed gratified, but the end intended by Nature itself is frustrated. The act is therefore immoral, as being clearly a violation of the law of Nature and of the law of God, the author of Nature. Just as (to use a further illustration) lying is immoral, because it is the use of the faculty of speech to defeat the natural purpose of speech, which is the expression of the thoughts and convictions of the mind; and just as suicide is immoral, because it violates Nature's law of self-preservation, which the whole powers and faculties of man's being tend to maintain; so birth prevention is immoral, because it is using a faculty of Nature of set purpose to render impossible the specific end for which it was given. It is verily and indeed prevention, prevention of the fulfilment of the designs of God.

#### IV. THE LAW OF MARRIAGE

But the immorality of this practice may be seen also from another point of view—namely the law of Mar-

riage. The primary end of marriage as instituted by Almighty God is the begetting and rearing of offspring for the perpetuation of the human species. This He clearly intimated to the first pair when He gave them His blessing for that purpose and said: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." It is true there are secondary ends in view in the state of matrimony, such as mutual help and society, and a means of allaying the concupiscence of the flesh. But these can never be substituted for the primary end, and still less be allowed to thwart it, and the primary end is so essential that it must never be positively excluded even on one single occasion in the use of marriage. But those who indulge in the unnatural practice referred to, do positively intend to exclude it in attempting to prevent offspring being born. They therefore sin, and sin grievously. The specific means which the Creator designed to prevent the extinction of the human race, this the ingenuity of our times has set about to thwart and render futile; so that, it may be truly said, if the Creator did not continue to take the perpetuation of the human race into His Own Hands and overrule the perverted will of man, not individually but generally, the disappearance of the human species would be in sight. Then what has been truly called Race-suicide would be the retribution of Nature upon man who dared to pervert its instincts from their destined end. And so convinced of this have the Governments of certain countries become—America, France, Canada, New Zealand, and other Dominions, to mention a few examples—that they have passed laws making it a penal offence to publish and distribute birth-control literature. Governments will tolerate many things, but one thing they cannot afford to tolerate, and that is a propaganda which endangers the very life of the State; and it is quite certain that a nation cannot survive if its cradles are empty, or its families are limited to less than the number of children that are required for national preservation.

Surely then, beloved children, it must be clear to all persons whose minds have not been warped by false teaching, or whose natures have not been corrupted by sinful indulgence, that even in the dictates of Nature alone they will find a complete refutation of those who would teach and enjoin the lawfulness of marital intercourse and the

lawfulness of birth prevention at the same time—just as if the law of Nature could speak with contradictory voices.

### V. HOLY SCRIPTURE

But as you must know, Almighty God does not leave us to the guidance of Nature alone when it is a question of morality. He speaks to us with His own articulate Voice, and in the matter of which we are treating His Voice is loud and unequivocal.

The Sacred Scriptures frequently refer to the fruitfulness of spouses as a great and unqualified blessing, whilst barrenness is regarded as a reproach; and record that one of the greatest blessings which the Almighty could promise to His faithful servant was that He would multiply his posterity "as the stars of Heaven and as the sand that is by the seashore." And domestic experience and the testimony of all peoples do but bear out the truth of the Scriptural teaching; for it will be generally found that the best, the happiest, and the healthiest families are the large or at least the normal families. They are the best school for the training and development of children, and parents in the evening of their days have the joy and consolation of seeing their children to the third and fourth generation, and of receiving their love and gratitude, and if need be also their help. In no class are children a greater blessing than among the toiling masses of the people whose lot is hard enough in this life, and it is these precisely that the birth-control campaign if successful would deprive of their last privilege and their highest natural joy—the delights of family life.

But we refer to the Holy Scripture in particular to see the way in which the anger of the Almighty was kindled against one who deliberately destroyed the fruitfulness of wedlock, and who, being the first recorded offender in this respect, may well be considered the prototype of such offenders today and during all time. His infamy has been immortalized in the sin which bears his name. It was Onan the son of Juda, who is said by the inspired writer to have been guilty of "a detestable thing," on account of which he was slain by God. It would almost seem that, at the beginning of the human race, God had intended to

make an example of Onan as a salutary warning to posterity, so that seeing his prostrate figure lying there, they might never be tempted to lay waste the fruitfulness of His vineyard.

## VI. THE VOICE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

But, Beloved Children in Jesus Christ, it is not on account of arguments drawn from Ethics and Scripture alone that we base our condemnation of the practice of birth control. Either of these sources would, indeed, be sufficient to convince any right-minded persons of the sinfulness of this practice. But we have other grounds on which we base our condemnation, and that is the living voice of the Catholic Church with which Our Lord promised that the Holy Spirit would abide for ever and teach her all truth. The Catholic Church which, as you know, is infallible in her teaching on Faith and morals, and which even now non-Catholics must admit is the greatest moral force in the world, she, with full knowledge of all that is implied in the practice of birth control, teaches now as she has ever taught, that it is a grave sin, separating us from the friendship of God, and rendering us liable to eternal punishment. That such teaching, emanating as it does from her who is "the pillar and ground of the truth," should deter her children from ever being led astray by the apostles of birth control is indeed only to be expected; but seeing at the same time, that this teaching has been the belief of Christianity from its beginning on till now, that all its great doctors, who have made moral questions their special study, and whose intellectual conclusions have never been in danger of being biased by any selfish end, or warped by any moral obliquity, have concurred in this teaching, surely this fact must have force even with those outside the Catholic Church, and make them feel that such teaching cannot be set aside which is supported by so great testimony.

## VII. A FALSE PRINCIPLE

We know, Beloved Children, that many specious reasons are assigned by the advocates of birth control for its moral justification. But there is no practice for which

men are not ready to find a reason so long as the practice in question enlists their passions or their personal interests in its favor. But when all these reasons are examined, it will be found that they are based on a principle which is utterly false, namely that the end justifies the means. We may never do evil that good may come of it. So immutably true is this principle that we may say with reverence that Almighty God Himself could not permit us to infringe it without contradicting His Divine attributes, and that means without ceasing to be God. Whether, then, it be in the interests of economy, or of greater personal freedom, or political considerations, or even the interests of health; no matter in what interest we may act, if the act itself is morally bad, no ulterior consideration in the world can ever justify it.

#### VIII. FALLACIOUS PROMISES

And here we would add at the same time that *the good* which the advocates of birth control promise, and *the evil* which they seek to avoid, even on the showing of scientific men, are generally fallacious.

1. No real but only fancied benefits can come from outraging the laws of Nature and the Divine purpose of Marriage. On the contrary, that real harm will result from the immoral practice in question, we do not require the assurance of so many and so distinguished medical men to convince us; we are assured of it from the well-known principle that the laws of Nature cannot be violated with impunity. Nature will have its revenge, which is only another way of saying that God is not mocked, and those who wilfully frustrate Nature find that out later, and to their cost.

Moreover, the vice is degrading and dishonoring to womanhood. Mere brute instinct, unnaturally gratified, has won the day. Self-indulgence is made an end in itself. The spiritual and moral elements that so ennoble conjugal union are sacrificed, and people who have given themselves over deliberately to such a moral perversion will find that it will not stop there but will make itself felt in other relations of matrimonial life as well.

2. That the world is suffering from many evils, physical, social, and economic is unfortunately true, but a

superabundance of children is not one of them. Advocates of the movement for the betterment of the race paint lurid pictures of swarms of children in what they call the slums, undeveloped, undesirable, and "unfit," and with the cry of "fewer children, better children," prescribe the remedy of birth prevention. What their particular standard of fitness is, or who gave them the right to fix one, we do not know. But one thing we know, that the trouble is not with the children or with the parents—in other words with Nature—but with the inhuman economic and social conditions in which they are condemned to live. Let these be remedied both in town and country and leave Nature alone, and there will be room enough and work enough to enable all to live a reasonable human life as the good God intended. Birth control is not a substitute for social reform and should not be allowed to distract attention from the need for it. Such evils as afflict society were never intended to be redressed by acting against the laws of Nature. Other means must have been put at man's disposal for improving the human race than by transgressing the law of God. And it will be found that when legislators and men in power have followed the laws of Justice and used the natural means at their disposal for the welfare of the people, there will be no need to invoke the immoral assistance of birth control.

#### IX. HARDSHIPS—AND THEIR REMEDY

We are well aware, indeed, that certain hardships are inevitable in the begetting and rearing of a family. That is one of the afflictions due to the fall of man, the bearing with which forms part of his atonement for sin. But the same law runs through the whole of the Religion of Jesus Christ, the law of struggle and of sacrifice: married or single, "through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts xiv, 21). At the same time, the difficulties arising in marriage are apt to be exaggerated and dangers foretold which have little reality. Hence Catholics are happy in having in addition to their medical advisers, wise and prudent spiritual advisers, in a matter so closely affecting their conscience; and they should hearken well to their advice, and rest assured that Divine Providence will never fail those who fear God and keep His commandments.



But in all these hardships God has not left us without a natural and legitimate remedy. That remedy is suggested when it is remembered that He does not intend that marriage should impose a greater burden or a severer trial on parents than they or either of them can bear. In certain circumstances, therefore, of grave difficulty or danger, there is a peremptory demand that men and women made in the likeness of God should realize their greatness, rise to the full stature of their dignity, and by means of their will, aided by the grace of God through which they can do all things, sacrifice a lower to a higher good. The power of so acting the good God puts into the hands of all as circumstances arise. It is self-control sanctified by the grace of God; for in marriage no more than in any other activity of life are people exempt from the law of prudence and self-restraint. And the virtue of conjugal chastity, that beautiful ornament of the state of wedlock, will never be wanting to those who earnestly seek and pray for it.

#### X. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

And speaking as we are to the children of God and members of the Body of Christ, we would conclude by lifting up your minds to view marriage with the eyes of faith in its supernatural character as a Sacrament of the Church. You know that our Blessed Lord raised it to this dignity, and that among the baptized the Sacrament of Marriage is a sacred symbol of the union between Christ and His Church; and that on this account the holy Apostle teaches that husbands should love their wives as Christ also loved the Church, "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephes. v, 27). You know, too, that a special grace is bestowed by the Sacrament on those who receive it worthily, to enable them to fulfil the duties of their holy state; and that accordingly your principal intention when marrying is not only to have children but to have children for God, and to bring them up in His holy fear and love in order to increase the number of His faithful servants on earth and the glorious company of the Saints in Heaven. The appreciation of such a high and holy end

will itself fill the soul with horror of anything that would profane the sanctity of marriage. Strengthened rather by the graces of the Sacrament, faithful spouses will be enabled to meet with fortitude and overcome all the trials and temptations of their state, and will enjoy even here below the blessings which the Church prays for them, the reward of their fidelity to the law of Nature and the law of Christ.

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost descend upon you and remain with you for ever.

We remain,

Yours faithfully in Jesus Christ,

- ✦ JAMES AUGUSTINE,  
*Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh.*
- ✦ DONALD, *Archbishop of Glasgow.*
- ✦ JAMES, *Bishop of Galloway.*
- ✦ JOHN, *Bishop of Dunkeld.*
- ✦ GEORGE, *Bishop of Aberdeen.*
- ✦ DONALD, *Bishop of Argyll and the Isles.*
- ✦ HENRY, *Bishop of Tipasa.*

## Who is to Blame?

RT. REV. JOHN L. BELFORD

*Reprinted from the Brooklyn "Tablet"*

**I**N *Liberty*, July 23d, there was an interesting and impressive article by Judge Oberwager, one of the Magistrates of New York City. It deals with sexual temptation and particularly with the way young women act and dress as an influence for evil thought, desire and act on the part of men and, especially, young men.

A magistrate meets all kinds of people, but, naturally, he meets those who are charged with some kind of crime. In the pleadings and testimony, he hears excuses and accusations. The accused persons try to extenuate if they cannot deny their guilt and the injured party tries to prove guilt and injury. In the flood of testimony the judge can see revealed the very hearts of men and discern the motives which led them to perpetrate the crime of which they are accused. No school of psychology can equal the court room.

### YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Years of experience have taught Judge Oberwager what he tells in this article. In writing it, he has no purpose but good. He is not a pessimist. He is not soured by disappointment or perfidy. He is one who tries to help his neighbors by pointing out evils which the best people are nursing and developing in their own homes and in the children they love.

Everyone will not agree with the Judge. In fact, several College Presidents have recently spoken and written convictions and declarations which contradict him and his experience. Many women will condemn him. Mothers will resent the blame he lays upon them for dressing their daughters in the prevailing mode and giving them that larger freedom which prevails in the very best homes. Girls will resent his declaration that they are largely re-

sponsible for the indignities which they accept and for the vices which they enkindle by exposure, indecent conversation and immodest behavior.

The Judge is frank. He speaks of the girls he knows. He does not give heresay. He tells what he has seen. He gives cases which have been heard in his court. He says these girls promote vice by their immodesty in dress, conversation and conduct. They read bad books. They attend indecent plays and pictures. They drink strong liquor. They dance immodestly. On the beaches, they expose themselves as much as the law will permit. They not only allow men to caress them and handle them improperly; they actually invite it and sneer at the man who does not take these liberties.

#### CHASTITY IS A JOKE TO MANY

All this, he says, leads to serious and frequent violations of chastity. Chastity, in fact, has become a joke to modern youth. Many are not ashamed to boast that they despise it and consider it no crime to violate it.

Naturally, the effect of these manners and this conduct is disastrous. It breaks down the barriers which Providence has built to protect womanhood and it encourages men and boys to make advances which are fatal to purity. Even the women who openly trade in the vice of impurity are complaining, the Judge says, of the inroads made on their profession by amateurs—college girls, shop girls and office clerks.

The Judge speaks plainly. He gives instances and evidence which bear out his arraignment. What he says has been said and preached and written before. But, as a rule, the critics were clergymen, and some of them did more harm than good by their extravagant exaggerations and their violent denunciations. Besides, the usual retort of the world to the protests of the Church is: "Oh, that is the business of the clergy; they do not understand; they have to find fault!"

It is good that one who is not a professional moralist has chosen to cry out in warning and endeavor to convince women that they are doing harm to themselves and to society by lowering the standards which propriety has fixed for dress, speech and conduct. It should not be necessary

for society to make laws regulating decency. Decency is one of the attributes of woman and she suffers most when she permits it to be invaded.

Women who know what the sex appeal is—women who are mothers—should not need warning that exposure is a temptation. St. Paul tells us that the senses are the windows of the soul; through them, Satan flings his fiery darts. These are the darts of thought and desire which enkindle the fires of lust.

#### WOMEN WHO CHEAPEN THEMSELVES

The women who live by the sale of virtue know the value of exposure. It is one of the tricks of the trade. How is it that good, even holy women either cannot or will not see that they are tempting men when they dress, talk and act without due reserve?

We all mark our own values. If we make ourselves cheap, we shall be counted cheap. If we act with dignity and propriety, we shall receive respect and consideration. Men do not love women who are loose. They may play with them, but they do not love them. Strange as it seems, many women do not see this. They are such fools! They think that attention is devotion. They do not see that the admiration of some men is only the evidence of wrong desire; that some caresses are worse than wounds; that some provide entertainment which is nothing more than devil's bait. "Beware of enemies when they come in the guise of friends." Especially, beware of those who come with gifts. The shores of time are strewn with moral wrecks. Many, if not most, of those wrecks are women. They owe their fate to their inordinate desire for notice or for pleasure. Blinded by vanity or deceived by appearances, they ran on the rocks of shame.

#### FOOLISH PARENTS

Judge Oberwager speaks particularly of girls. Their trouble begins at home. Indulgent parents not only permit them, but encourage them to develop a craze for pleasure. To have a good time, they must become popular. That means they must be in the swim. They must dress, talk and act in the prevailing mode. They must become "attractive."

Parents are foolish enough to take pride in what they call the admiration their daughter receives. To help her to attract attention and win this admiration they permit her to run wild. The popular girl has to compromise principle and permit liberties which degrade womanhood. The girl who will not drink and pet and dance like a wanton will be a wall-flower. The pity of it is that so many high-minded, pure-hearted girls accept what they call the inevitable. Saying, "they all do it," they adopt the manners and the morals of their set. What they do at first with reluctance and shame, they soon do freely and shamelessly and virtue pays the price of admiration and popularity.

#### FOOLISH CATHOLIC PARENTS

This applies to Catholics as well as non-Catholics. Many of our Catholic High Schools and Colleges have yielded to what they call the spirit of the time. They permit the students to have dances which, in some cases, have become orgies and they wink at many violations of decency and propriety. Of course, these schools are confronted with a dread alternative. Parents will not send their daughters to a school which is not popular. But are we going to sell ourselves? It is not without reason that the Holy Father has implored Catholic women to resist the appeal of paganism and, remembering the sacredness of their sex, set their faces against indecent dress and shameful conduct.

#### WOMEN HOLD KEYS OF MORALITY

What our women are that will the world be. They have it in their power to keep men in their place. If they are going to cater to the desires of men, they will be destroyed and, in turn, they will destroy the destroyers.

The weak point in Judge Oberwager's article is the danger that men will use it to excuse themselves for their own wicked conduct. In fact, the Judge courts condemnation when he quotes the famous and infamous excuse of Adam: "The woman tempted me!"

Of all the weak excuses, of all the contemptible pleas which have ever fallen from human lips there is nothing more despicable than those four words. They have been

used millions of times. They were used in a recent murder trial in our own city by a contemptible cur who was whining for mercy which he did not deserve and which, thank God, he did not receive from the jury.

Perhaps God despised Adam more for his excuse than he did for his crime. He fell because he chose to fall. So do we all fall. Sin is a voluntary act. There are not two standards. Sin in man is as bad as sin in woman. There are many circumstances in which it is worse. But it is absurd and utterly wrong to excuse it. A decent man respects a woman. He sees in her one of God's children. A Christian sees in her one who has been ransomed and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; who is a living temple of the Holy Ghost. He will no more insult or abuse her than he will violate a church or desecrate a tabernacle. He will treat her with the consideration and reverence he demands for his own mother, sister or daughter and despises the woman who encourages advances. He may tempt her, but he will respect her if she repels him, just as he will loathe her if she accepts him.

### EVIL-MINDED MEN

Let us be honest. We know there is no excuse for the evil-minded, foul-mouthed, libidinous generation of men, Catholic and non-Catholic, young and old, whose one aim in life is sexual gratifications. They have no respect for God. How can they respect God's children? They work merely that they may earn the price they must pay for the pleasures they crave. They build up their health and their strength merely for the purpose of being able to eat more and more enjoy the forbidden fruit. At least seventy-five per cent of the work of our physicians and surgeons is an endeavor to repair the ravages done by these unclean satyrs. They fill the hospitals, the madhouses, the cemeteries—yes, they fill Hell itself with their victims.

People talk and preachers describe the mercy of God. But there is such a thing as misrepresenting even the Divine mercy. We know that the mercy of God is above all His works; that there is no sin which God is not willing and anxious to forgive; that His forgiveness is complete and without reserve. But the sinner must repent. That repentance must be real and sincere. It must be the work

of Divine grace. No one can repent unless God grants him the grace of repentance. He grants that grace to those who humbly and perseveringly seek it—to those who do what they can to deserve it. Here is where many sinners fail. They get frightened at the approach of death. They know their guilt and the fear of Hell makes them lament and weep, but that is not repentance. Repentance comes from the heart. It comes from the consciousness that sin displeases the all-good God and deserves His wrath and punishment. Then, repentance implies not only regret, but reparation. How are these men who have sent to Hell one or more victims, going to repent? How can they hope for Heaven? Is the just God going to welcome them and forever exclude their victims? Can they be happy, conscious that these victims are forever miserable?

No doubt, the victims are lost because they have not repented. But who made them victims? Who importuned them? Who wove about them the net which finally won their consent or assent?

This thought ought to make many men serious and it ought to give some of our Catholic men good reason to ask themselves if they have not closed the doors of Heaven for themselves as well as for others.



# **The Marriage Bond**

JOHN F. DUSTON, S.J.

*Reprinted from the "Baltimore Catholic Review"*

**W**E are hearing constant expressions of agreeable surprise at a new and widespread interest in religion, even in quarters where anything but religious interest might be hoped for.

## **WORLD SEES NEED OF RELIGION**

The fact is indeed undeniable; a rudderless, drifting, bored world, tired of getting nowhere and dully aching from the bitter experience of freedom from religious restraint, is actually realizing the quick and imperative need of religion to save it from the complete shipwreck which paganism always did and always must produce. But it is equally apparent that this renewed interest in religion is, for the most part, speculative and not practical.

While the need of religion in our civic life becomes more insistently recognized every day, not only is little or no attempt made to make it of vital, practical value, but, on the contrary, the most outstanding activities, movements and propaganda in our midst today seem vigorously bent on destroying what shreds of practical religion are left to the world at large.

## **MATERIALISM IS SPREADING**

Now, this lack of practical interest in religion is due, on the one hand, to the absolutely free propagation of materialism, teaching its destructive doctrines when, where and how it wishes and beating back by ridicule or intolerable persecution anyone who dares raise a feeble whisper of remonstrance. On the other hand, it is due to the fact that, generally speaking, the voice of religious authority has been decidedly weakened.

Even a little thought will reveal the fact that this unrestrained spread of materialism is responsible for many of the evils which exist among us and create the present-day problems. To it are directly traceable the increase in crime and suicide among the young; the decadence of morality and the casting aside of moral standards; unscrupulousness in business; race suicide and an alarmingly deadly increase in the divorce rate. But most of all, and what is the dread source of all the others, materialism is responsible for the evils which have invaded the American home.

#### STATE DEPENDS ON HOME

Now, the state depends absolutely on the home. Legislation making for peace and prosperity can be piled to the sky, but it is hopelessly futile with a people whom materialism and the disintegrated home have left without standards, without self-discipline and respect for authority, without reverence for law and the commands of God. That is why the supreme and most fundamental problem in our national life today is the problem of the home. There is only one influence in the world which can do anything to solve it—and that is the influence of religion.

Nothing but the voice of Almighty God, speaking through religious conviction, can command and guide the men and women who found our homes. It is real, practical religion which alone can inspire obedience to man by first inspiring complete obedience to God.

#### RELIGION FOE OF MATERIALISM

Religion and religion alone can effectively resist and cast out the materialism which is endeavoring to make a mockery of the home. And it alone can sufficiently and securely inspire the sacred trust committed to the parents of training their little ones for citizenship in the kingdom of God and consequently in good citizenship here on earth. Any religious authority which is powerful enough to effect this is, therefore, in reality, the supreme safeguard and bulwark of the state.

The plain fact is that the Catholic Church is and indirectly at least, is admitted to be, the only religious authority who is fearless enough and powerful enough to raise

such a voice. She is fully equipped and quite eager, not only to resist and expose materialism and its teachers, whether in the schools, in the press, on the street corners or in the citadels of wealth and power, but to vigorously condemn it for the vile thing that it is and insist that it be driven out of human lives.

#### SAFEGUARD OF THE STATE.

This she unquestionably does in that spot which is supremely precious to God and to her—the home. It, therefore, follows that the Catholic Church, despite all accusations which the ignorant and bigoted may make against her, is, in reality, one of the mightiest safeguards of the state and should be cherished as such.

It would be well, then, not only for her own children, but for all the people to hearken to her principles and teachings and earnestly and devoutly put them in practice in their homes. From Jesus Christ, her Divine Master, she has learned her ideals and fearlessly tells the world that marriage is not a man-made or a state-made civil contract with all the impermanence and unreliability attached to such, but a sacred contract, entered into by three persons, a man and a woman and God; and its purpose is the peopling of the world with the children of God, who are one day to gaze upon Him forever.

#### MARRIED UNTO DEATH

She maintains, in consequence, that marriage and the home are permanent institutions, resting on no such volatile things as sentiment, physical attraction and compatibility, but on the eternal, unchangeable rock of duty and justice, dissoluble only by God through death.

In the face of materialistic interests, she proclaims that the supreme concern of the home is the child, for whom it was made and whom God has placed in the parents' hands as His most precious possession to be guarded and sanctified and to whose well-being and upbringing every other interest must, in duty and justice, be sternly subjected.

It is the Catholic ideal, therefore, that the home revolves about the child; that the child's welfare, temporal and, especially, spiritual, must dictate its activities and re-

lationships. In consequence since the child's interests need love, understanding, self-sacrifice, harmony and holiness, the prime duty of husband and wife, as sworn at the altar, is to cherish each other in mutual love and encouragement.

### TO LIVE TOGETHER LOVINGLY

They are not, as in the selfish travesty on marriage, unfortunately so prevalent today, to tolerate each other so long as material advantage persists but, with the realization that their duty to each other excels their duty to anyone else in the world, they are to forget self and patiently and lovingly meet life together, encouraging each other, advancing in goodness and holiness and the love of God.

St. Paul has declared that according to God's ideal, held up to human nature, the wife is to be obedient to the husband, not servilely, but lovingly. She must teach her children obedience and reverence to him, as the agent appointed by Almighty God to head their little household. She must inspire him to nobler, more unselfish manhood and with love and understanding patiently assist him. It is the husband's duty to cherish his wife as his very soul, to reverence her, to provide with all his power for her well-being, to be patient with her defects and to be always one with her in heart and mind in the rearing of their children.

### TRUE IDEALS OF HOME

Thus and thus only can the real and true ideals of home be realized. Against the teachings of present-day materialism which has produced our moral laxity, our birth-control, our lessening of respect for women; against our bickering, childless marriages and our consequently advancing divorce rate and our weakened homes, the Catholic Church raises a mighty voice in the name of Jesus Christ and bids her children to fashion their homes on the plan of Nazareth.

The Divine Architect who planned that home and all other Christian homes with it, laid the foundation for a structure which, be it palace or hovel, is in very truth, the citadel of love, a real tabernacle of happiness, a little earthly reflection of heaven, a little heaven on earth.